DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 200 261 JC 810 134

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TITLE A Current Assessment of How Community College Vocational Education Leadership Needs Are Met: Implications for the Future.
PUB DATE [79]
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Role; *Community Colleges; Federal Legislation; Federal State Relationship; *Leadership; Leadership Responsibility; Leadership Training; State Departments of Education; Two Year Colleges; Universities; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS National Center for Vocational Education OH

ABSTRACT

As vocational programs take on increased importance during the 1980's, it becomes necessary to assess the effectiveness of the vocational education leadership exercised at the national, state, university, and local college levels. At the national level, leadership is evidenced in legislatively mandated programs, such as the Graduate Leadership Development Program, and in the activities of the National Center for Vocational Education. At the state level, leadership has been exercised through the Educational Commission of the States and through the provision of in-service activities for educators. Universities have helped fill the leadership void through innovative programs, such as Temple University's Leadership Intern Field Experience, and leadership potential has always existed with instructors and deans at local colleges. Yet, several leadership problems have yet to be addressed: (1) a national policy for leadership development should be implemented in an effort to increase articulation among the states; (2) more states and colleges should become aware of the activities of the National Center for Vocational Education; (3) research should become less dependent upon targeted project monies, which leave many vocational education areas wanting; (4) the "good old boy" leadership network which exists within the states should be severed; and (5) college instructors need to take on a more professional attitude. Without enhanced leadership, vocational education programs are surely endangered. (JP)

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A CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP NEEDS ARE MET: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

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A CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP NEEDS ARE MET

Implications for the Future

Abstract

Vocational education will be playing an increasingly important role in the growth of this country, not only from the pragmatic and economic-technological perspective, but from the personal and socio-political one as well.

Simultaneously, the community colleges will be charged with much of this vocational education. A community college vocational educational leadership base must be developed and cultivated if the community college is truly sincere in meeting the vocational and technical needs of its community.

Where and how does a community college develop and cultivate a vocational educational leadership base? The article describes four areas of activity. They are: 1) National, 2) State, 3) University and/or localized origins. Succinctly, these vocational educational leadership areas may not, as they are, be sufficient to meet the future community college vocational educational leadership needs.

A CURRENT ASSESSMENT
OF
HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
LEADERSHIP NEEDS ARE MET

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

As we face the educational needs of the eighties and beyond, vocational education should be germane to all community college mission statements. According to Priest 1979:

> "Vocational education is a fundamental part of the community college mission and can make a valuable contribution to the overall program of any such college."

To often, though, the community colleges limit their potential by the way vocational education is organized and administered, and this is attributed to the lack of leadership--vocational educational leadership to be exact.

Ostensibly, vocational education will be playing an increasingly important role in the growth of this country, not only from the pragmatic and economic-technological perspective, but from the personal and socio-political one as well. For the next generation, educational emphasis will be placed on the vocational areas. One ingredient for successful community college vocational educational is, obviously, sound leadership. According to Bottoms, (1979):

> "Our greatness as leaders in vocational education today will be determined by how well we address the current and emerging needs of our nation and its citizens. Our failure would be to address needs that no longer exist."

If this is how vocational educational leadership is perceived, then we must plan accordingly.

Traditional community college vocational education leadership seems to evolve from four areas of activity. They are: 1) National, 2) State, 3) University and/or 4) localized origins. Over the years, each of the areas have addressed vocational education leadership needs. Depending on your perspective and your evaluative criteria each has had success in meeting some of the vocational education leadership needs of this country.

The U. S. Office of Education has stated that in 1978 a total of $32,719,230 dollars was spent on vocational technical education pre-service and inservice activities of federal, state and local (sources). It is difficult to assess how much of that sum was spent on community college vocational education leadership and at what effectiveness level.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

The need for leaders in the field of vocational education was recognized by Congress when they enacted the Vocational Education Ammendments of 1968, Public Law 90-35, the section dealing with the "Training and Development Program for Vocational Education Personnel", which provided opportunities for leadership development to those who met certain criteria. P. L. 90-35 has been altered by the Vocational Ammendments of 1976 and is commonly referred to as the Graduate Leadership Development Program.

In discussing national programs that help meet vocational education leadership needs it is difficult not to mention the National Center for Vocational Education. The Center has supported research and a development thrust to determine the training needs for developing vocational education leadership. For example, the Center provides for the National Leadership

Development Seminar for State Directors. Such a program aids the individual states in fulfilling their leadership needs. The Center currently sponsors about 55 to 60 leadership conferences per year.

STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

State governments and their respective educational departments have tremendous potential to help provide the needed community college vocational leadership of the future. In fact, the states collectively can have a major influence on national policy as well. The Educational Commission of the States, which is made up of 43 member states and territories, can determine national goals and help to explain the various educational positions of this country.

But even before influencing national policy, the individual states are, or can be, prime pockets of leadership innovation. According to Peterson, (1971) individual states who are progressive in vocational education can have a regional and national impact. Those in leadership positions who feel and understand vocational education will have a profound effect on the success of vocational education.

Some states have developed comprehensive pre-service and/or in-service leadership programs to help meet their vocational education leadership needs. Georgia and Massachusetts among others have pre-service leadership programs that will help their vocational supervisors and directors meet the challenge. Intern and extern programs are also important in providing for leadership skills. Arkansas and Pennsylvania have utilized this technique to help prepare personnel for leadership roles. Pennsylvania and Ohio also utilize modularized leadership instruction. The Florida legislature has earmarked 5% of its community college budget for staff development with emphasis in leadership programs. Why can't this idea be incorporated into more of the individual state departments of vocational education?

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

It is difficult to discuss individual state vocational educational programs without mentioning their respective universities which is the third area of concern. Many new and innovative programs have emerged throughout the country to help fill the community college vocational education leadership void. Temple University's Leadership Intern Field Experience is one such example. According to Schaefer, Moss (1978), the higher education institutions of vocational education are for the most part under-utilized. There is no question that teacher education in-service and pre-service programs are an integral part in providing vocational education leadership, and it's a legitimate drain on university resources . . . but there's more. Such institutions by nature should provide for scholarly research, especially that which pertains to the community colleges. Such research should incorporate other disciplines wherever applicable; such research should develop an intellectual base that should learn from the past, meet the present needs and hopefully forsee the future. Out of economic necessity the vocational education department relies on state and federal monies, but these "project monies", although worthwhile, may have left research related vocational education unserved. This may be the detriment to the long-term goals of vocational education and its leadership.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

Finally, the local day to day vocational education activities have a tremendous potential to produce leadership. Vocational educational leadership comes from within. It comes from the community college vocational education instructor, coordinator, supervisor, director, and/or dean. Effective leadership is not mandated, but developed. Administrative duties are not synonymous

with those of leadership, although the distinct potential is there. These people working first-hand with the numerous problems of vocational education are also the ones that can capitalize on the resources at hand and effect change.

There is no question that progress has been made during the past decade--both in the identification and preparation of persons with high leadership potential and in the number and scope of programs for persons already in administrative positions. But the community college vocational education leadership needs of this country may not be met in the future. This is not to say that at the present there is no community college vocational leadership in this country, nor is it implying that there will be none in the future. What is being suggested is that current trends of vocational education leadership assessment and the meeting of those needs as described may not be adequate. The unprecedented demand for future community college vocational education leadership will not be satisfied by traditional means.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Several implications seem to surface when discussing future community college vocational education leadership needs. If future needs are to be met, then a national policy for vocational educational leadership development should be developed. Such a policy would tend to alleviate the current patchwork effect that persist throughout the country and lend an air of stability and comprehensiveness to each state's leadership thrust. The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education has called for such a policy and it would definitely increase articulation between and among the states.

Another point would be that many states have not taken advantage of the Center and what its mission stands for and much needs to be done to fill this vocational education leadership void. According to Conrad, Adams (1979) 29% of those who responded to a survey of constituents of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education were not familiar with the Center's programs and 39% only read about or heard about such services, and 22% of those surveyed participated in one or more of the National Center Leadership conferences--a definite under-utilization exists here. Still the Center remains both sensitive and reactive to the national vocational educational leadership needs. Greater publicity is needed to acquaint the states to the many services offered by the Center.

There is no secret about the fact that the educational dollar is being stretched, and many university vocational educational departments are gearing their research to "project monies." This targeted approach leaves other vocational education areas wanting, especially those of the community college. According to Schaefer and Moss (1978), the University Council for Vocational Education, a group organized to further vocational education, advocates increased governmental and institutional support in the formulation and development of vocational education foundations and policies; increased articulation not only with related educational disciplines, but with all human resources be at the local level or the federal level; eliminate the dependency on government "project monies", and encourage direct institutional and federal support for scholarly research.

The all important ingredient of local leadership is imperative to the success and effectiveness of any vocational education program but sometimes such leadership is compromised. The mutually protective "good old boy" network that seems to exist from state departments of vocational education through the colleges and universtities to the community colleges and

ultimately to the school districts must be severed. Leadership is stiffled under such a network; innovativeness and change is restricted.

It is time for the local vocational educator to stand up and be counted; they must believe that they are second to no other educational discipline; they must believe they are crucial to the continued success of this country. Most vocational educators believe this--but their rhetoric is contained to the faculty room. They must publicize their wants and desires; they must publicize their successess too. This may take the form of professional growth, conference and meeting attendance, committee work, etc. Professionalism for a lack of a better term sums up these and many more. Community colleges vocational educators must become more professional and in so doing they will transcend to his/her levels of leadership. Vocational educators must profess their identity, not hide under or succumb to it.

Like obsolete equipment, inadequate vocational leadership poses a serious threat to the very existance of vocational education. Without local leadership, community college vocational education programs may become mandates from above. This is unfortunate for the real understanding level occurs at the local level, but leadership is needed to get such understanding to the policymakers.

This article has been concerned with four areas that will be instrumental in providing for the leadership needs of vocational education in the future. The four areas were concerned with those leadership activities of national, state, university, and local significance. The purpose was to develop an awareness of how current vocational education leadership occurs and what the possible implications are for future leadership needs.

Unequivocally, vocational education will be in greater need in the next quarter century than ever before--can we meet this demand for quality vocational education leadership?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When this article was written, Dennis F. Ringling was currently on a sabbatical leave from The Williamsport Area Community College, Williamsport, Pennsylvania where he taught Forest Science and Technology. He is currently a Graduate Leadership Development awardee at Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania working toward his doctorate in comprehensive vocational education.

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